

Serial No. 10/780,648

Docket # 2331-001

**REMARKS**

**Examiner has rejected claims 1-20 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hedrick (US Patent 2,150,768) in view of MacKenzie (US Patent 2,065,232)**

Applicant has amended claim 1 to more clearly distinguish structurally over the cited prior art combination of Hedrick and MacKenzie et al. Applicant has amended the claim to more clearly define the upstream-extending inlet and the recombination of the annular and central flows into an entirety of the gas flow after passing through the apparatus.

Both Hedrick and MacKenzie et al. have a downstream-depending portion which prevents the combining of the entirety of the annular flow with the central flow following passage through the ports in the annular wall. There is no contemplation or suggestion in either reference to remove this downstream portion.

Applicant believes that claim 1 is clearly distinguished over the prior art cited and that claim 1 and those claims which depend therefrom are in condition for allowance.

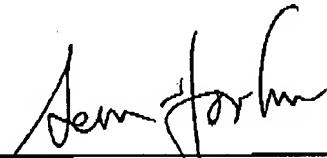
Further, Applicant has amended claim 20 to correct the grammatical structure of the claim. Applicant believes that no new matter has been introduced as a result of the amendment.

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Reconsideration of the claims currently on file is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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